

biased students of the subject must accept, is that an acceleration of the increase of the French population can only be secured by increasing the productive efficiency of the people, which involves (a) the increase of capital by individual enterprise and thrift, (b) the increase of skill by education and efficient use of effort, (c) the adoption of labour saving machinery for which increased capital is necessary, and the increase of hours of labour or of shift-work for making full use of it, (d) the stimulus of individual gain and luxury, and (e) the removal of measures which foster the increase of the improvident and less capable at the expense of the provident and capable. Although these conclusions will be most unwelcome to sentimentalists of every hue, there can be no doubt of their correctness, and Dr. Lascaux's remarkable work should be thoroughly studied by all who wish to understand not only the problem of population but all other social questions.

C. V. DRYSDALE.

Shipley, Sir A. E. *Life: An Introduction to the Study of Biology.* Cambridge University Press. 1923. Price 6s.

STUDENTS of biology need no introduction to Sir Arthur Shipley, who by his previous publications has shown his ability to present, in an interesting form, the salient features of this fascinating branch of science.

In the space of a couple of hundred pages he has succeeded in discussing a wide range of functions characteristic of living organisms, including within his survey: protoplasm, cells, feeding, the nitrogen cycle, soil problems, digestion, respiration, movement, reproduction and rhythm. Though the book is admirably adapted to the needs of students entering upon the study of biology, its scope is greater than this; for by its lucidity and delightful style it must prove of interest to all thinking men and women. This was the author's hope, for at the end of his preface he writes "Finally I venture to hope that this book will not be without interest to the public that is not preparing for examinations, and thank heaven that public is still in the great majority!"

The illustrations are clear and well chosen; and the numerous snatches of verse scattered through the text, while adding humour to the book, give an insight into the author's humanistic outlook on life. After a discussion of the movement of the centipede's legs the following is particularly haunting.

■ "A centipede was happy quite,
Until a toad in fun,
Said 'Pray which leg moves after which?'
This raised her doubts to such a pitch,
She fell exhausted in a ditch,
Not knowing how to run."

D. W. CUTLER.

Swinburne, J., F.R.S. *Population and the Social Problem.* George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. London, 9124. Pp. 380. Price 15s. net.

THAT public interest in the population problem is growing is shown by the increasing number of books now being published on that subject.

One of the latest is a book by Mr. J. Swinburne, F.R.S. entitled "Population and the Social Problem." Mr. Swinburne is strongly opposed to socialism and to most of the follies of politicians and his main theory is that the troubles of mankind cannot be wiped out by any political devices as long as population increases so rapidly. Further, he rightly insists that most of the troubles of the poor are due to their own lack of self-restraint in the matter of child production. But he recognises that this is not a popular thing for politicians to say. He puts the point very clearly by referring to a supposed discussion among a community of rabbits:—

"One rabbit said: 'You are poor because you are prolific.' They would not have this at any price, so they reviled him and refused to listen, and said his theory had been disproved; for his explanation made out that the misery was really their own fault, and it is impossible to get an animal with the brain of a rabbit to realise that its troubles are due to its own faults."

Unfortunately not only do our politicians refrain from insisting on hard facts which cannot finally be evaded, but they are constantly directing their energies to encouraging the classes that ought to produce least to produce most. It has long been notorious that the poorest classes are the most reckless, not only in the matter of child production but in all the ways in which they regulate their lives. Probably the very fact of poverty makes prudence appear valueless. Mr. Swinburne puts this point very well.

"Finally we come down to the lowest classes of all. Here we have low wages or none. Irregular casual work, and pay to match; abject poverty, hopeless incompetence, and the maximum of misery. This is coupled with irresponsible multiplication of the lowest and worst types, and a high death-rate, especially of infants. To make matters worse, every effort is made to keep the worst and most miserable classes as large as possible by poor relief, 'charity,' and government protection."

If this policy be continued, and under present political conditions there seems every likelihood that it will be, the result must be a general lowering of the average standard of the whole community, and that in turn must finally mean a lowering of the capacity for wealth production and consequently a reduction of the available means of living. Mr. Swinburne lays stress on the fact that the socialists in the main ignore the population problem. It is however equally true that most members of the other political parties act in much the same manner. They find it politically unprofitable to tell the plain truth; and with the average politician that ends the matter.

HAROLD COX.

Wiggam, Albert Edward. *The New Decalogue of Science*. Indianapolis. The Bobbs Merrill Company. 1923. Pp. 314.

THIS Book is a vigorous attempt to popularize biological teaching with regard to the importance of heredity. It is couched in a somewhat original form and consists of five chapters entitled "The five warnings" and one called "The Ethical Transition." These are followed